



Speech By  
**Hon. Meaghan Scanlon**


**MEMBER FOR GAVEN**

---

Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2022

**MOTION**

**Queensland Floods**

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (4.38 pm): I rise to support the Premier's motion. Firstly I would like to acknowledge everyone who has been impacted by the recent floods and those who have rolled up their sleeves to help with the recovery. Like many communities across Queensland, parts of the Gold Coast have been impacted by floods, including through the tragic loss of life. During times of crisis, we certainly rally together to help families, businesses and communities get back on their feet. That is what Queenslanders do and, over the years, they have had to do it more than most.

This fortnight has been a terrifying reminder of what climate change is already doing. Brisbane experienced the largest three-day rainfall record in history. As the Premier spoke about last week, it is here, it is on us and we need to act. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has recently reiterated to the world that human induced climate change, including more frequent, intense and extreme events, has already caused widespread adverse impacts. On Monday, former QFES commissioner Lee Johnson said—

... the disasters of today are not like the disasters of the past. Over my decades of service I experienced floods and bushfires that were more frequent and intense, and cyclones that were more damaging.

As Queensland's environment minister, I take my responsibility to reduce emissions extremely seriously—and I know that every member of the Palaszczuk government does as well. Whether it is through setting targets for renewable energy or emissions reduction or through actions like the \$55 million investment in electric vehicles announced this morning, we are working every single day to address the threat of climate change. Recently we have seen the federal government finally acknowledge that climate change is a reality but, like in so many other critical areas, its members are all talk and no action. When asked about responding to climate change on Monday, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said—

Responding to climate change is not just about reducing emissions ... it is about boosting your resilience and your adaptation ...

I agree. It is both of those. That is why, alongside our actions to reduce emissions, the Palaszczuk government has worked with councils to deliver climate risk management strategies, climate resilient alliances and QCoast 2100 to safeguard coastal towns. Meanwhile, not only has the federal government railed against actions to reduce emissions, like vetoing funding for renewable energy projects; it has also failed on adaptation and resilience. Nine years ago the Productivity Commissioner wrote a lengthy report on what the federal government should be doing to adapt to climate change. How many of those recommendations were implemented? The answer is none. They have had an enormous bucket of money that they could have used for adaptation but, of the 20 applications Queensland made for the \$4.8 billion supposed disaster recovery fund, only three have been accepted. They have had almost a decade to deliver, and what do they have to show for it? Floods, fires, cyclones.

The alarms have been ringing for many years but Scott Morrison is clearly tone-deaf. The past fortnight has told two stories: one story of Queensland resilience, of people banding together to help one another, of frontline workers responding to immediate and devastating floods; and the other story of the federal government—inept, unequipped and unprepared yet again to deal with natural disasters, that waited 10 days to declare an emergency just so Scott Morrison could be there to announce it, that has a natural disaster fund that has accrued more money in interest than it has spent, and that has set one rule for disaster assistance in its own marginal seats in New South Wales and another rule for the thousands of Queenslanders affected.

Last week I was with Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate at the start of the construction of the Gold Coast Disaster Management Coordination Centre, a critical project to ensure we are equipped for future climate disasters. The Palaszczuk government has proudly contributed \$10 million to this project but, unfortunately, again, the federal government will not contribute a single dollar. The mayor of the Gold Coast City council said, 'I hope the government gets the message. The people of the Gold Coast don't want to be taken for granted. We've got five federal seats here, all blue, and you can't give us a few dollars of disaster management money to save lives and property.'

We see the same at a state level, though, from those opposite. Time and time again, Gold Coast MPs in this House, the dominant political force in Queensland's second-largest city, fail to stand up and secure our fair share from their friends in Canberra. There is nothing from the members for Currumbin or Coomera, whose communities were impacted, yet their constituents will be worse off than those across the border. We have all talked about the devastating impact of these floods on people, but we in this House are privileged to be legislators—to have the real power to make change, whether that is on climate change, on resilience or on standing up for our communities when things get tough. That is what we are doing. I commend the motion to the House.